Approved by U. P. Government for High School Classes.

Fighters of Freedom

(ON ALL FRONTS)

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Ved Prakash Gramy Vidhyadhikari

PREFACE

Man's search for knowledge, his unceasing fight for freedom from ignorance, began as soon as he opened his eyes in the first dawn of civilization. This fight has continued ever since and a number of new fronts have been opened. Every age, every country and every front has produced its own heroes and martyrs—men and women who have fought and laid down their lives for noble causes. Many of them have remained local figures, but some had a universal stature and have become leaders of the whole human race.

Brief life-sketches of six such people drawn from three continents have been given in this book in the belief that their noble example will inspire and mould growing minds. Due care has been taken to include only those names with whom our young students are expected to be familiar, and four of the six heroes selected are famous Indians of the past and the present. Care has also been taken to select representatives from different fronts so that if Gautama Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi represent the glorious achievements of the soul-force, and Florence Nightingale stands for

the spirit of social service, Abraham Lincoln and Jawaharlal Nehru symbolise man's fight against slavery and against that ugliest of all evils—war.

All the six lives are written in simple but idiomatic English suitable for students in our High School classes. Utmost care has been taken to see that the student is not lost in the maze of words. He will catch and absorb the moral of the lesson more easily if the language is not too difficult for him.

Key-Questions have been provided at suitable places in each lesson with the object of concentrating the mind of the student upon the main point being described. Suitable notes clarifying allusions and references have also been given at the end of the book which, it is hoped, will serve the purpose of providing good inspirational reading to students in the High School classes.

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Freedom from Sin

I

THE ENLIGHTENED ONE

I

Key-Question : *Where and how was Gautama Buddha born ?*

Life for most people is a mystery, and they do not bother their heads about it. They are born, they live and they die–this is all they know of life; and this, truly speaking, is as much as even the beasts of the forest know. But some there are who think over the problems of life and death. They look for light in the surrounding darkness, and having found out a solution, put it before the world for the guidance of all mankind. They are the enlightened ones, the prophets and preachers of religion, who show the path of salvation to men and, when they die, leave their names behind them written in letters of light.

Such a man was born in India a little over twenty-five hundred years ago. He became

known to the world as Gautama, the Buddha, but it is difficult to say what his original name was. Gautama was the name of his clan, as Shakya was his family name. Buddha, which means *the enlightened*, was added to his name later on after his enlightenment. So was probably the case with the name Siddhartha which means *one whose objective has been attained.*

He was born a prince, for his father, Shuddhodana, was the ruler of the Shakya kingdom of Kapilvastu situated at the foot of the Himalayas just south of modern Nepal. His mother was Mayadevi, daughter of King Suprabuddha of Devadah. But Gautama was born in the forest of Lumbini, not in the palace of Shuddhodana. This was just as it should have been, for did not the prince later on leave his father's palace to seek, and find, enlightenment in the silence of the forest ?

It happened when Mayadevi was going to the kingdom of her father. She was accompanied by guards and attendants. When it was noon, they stopped for rest in the forests of Lumbini where the Queen gave birth to her son who was to show the path of salvation to all mankind. But she did not live to see this happen. She died seven days after the birth of her son, and the



THE ENLIGHTENED ONE

little prince was looked after by her sister, who too was a wife of King Shuddhodana.

A learned astrologer foretold a great future for the prince while he was yet a small child. "He will be a great man," said the learned one. "He will exercise great influence over men and acquire great fame. But he will follow the path of renunciation so that he may lead the race of man to its salvation."

II

Key-Question : *How did Gautama differ from the other boys of his age ? What did his father do to change his mind ?*

The child soon grew up into a beautiful and accomplished boy. He was put under the most learned teachers of the kingdom who gave him training fit for a prince of the warrior caste. The young prince proved to be a devoted student and soon knew more than his teachers could teach him. But even at this age, he was very different from the other boys of his caste. He refused to take part in the games of his playmates, but loved to sit all by himself in the shadows of the forest, lost in deep thought. What were the thoughts that kept his young mind so busy ? Were

they the ambitious dreams of a prince, or questions of a deeper and more complicated nature ?

When the King, his father, was told about this, he became very anxious. He was reminded of the prophecy that had been made about the prince when he was quite a child. What would happen to his kingdom if his only son and successor renounced the world ? He consulted men of ripe wisdom and experience who advised him to put a few more chains round the feet of the prince by finding out a beautiful and loving wife for him.

This idea appealed to the King. A search was, therefore, begun for a suitable bride for the prince. The choice ultimately fell upon the beautiful princess Gopa or Yashodhara, the daughter of Dandapani. Dandapani was at first unwilling to give his daughter to prince Gautama, for reports about the latter's unworldly conduct had reached his years. But his hesitation disappeared when the prince showed his skill in the arena and defeated all his rivals in feats of arms and power of mind.

The prince was thus married and led a happy life for some years. The King, his father, was pleased but not fully satisfied. He was trying to make the life of the prince so full of pleasures

that there should be no time left for serious thought. So he got a very luxurious pleasure-house constructed for Gautama and provided it with all the luxuries that youth can desire. Gautama was not allowed to go out of this pleasure-house unless he was accompanied by guards. The King wanted to keep his son ignorant of disease, old age and death. Even the servants in the pleasure-house were all young and beautiful.

III

Key-Question : *What were the events that changed the course of Gautama's life ?*

But even this could not change the nature of the prince. He remained as he was before, and would often sit lost in deep thought, thinking, no doubt, of the problems of life and death. Meanwhile, certain events took place which, although very ordinary in themselves, changed the whole course of his life. The first of these was the birth of his own son. This event filled the heart of Shuddhodana with great joy, for he thought that yet another chain had been put around Gautama's feet. The prince also was happy, but for different reasons. He thought

that having provided an heir to the throne, he was now free to go his own way.

Another event was his chance acquaintance with the three greatest evils of the world—old age, disease and death.

One day, he was riding through the city on his way to one of the King's gardens. As he drove in his golden chariot, followed by a large body of attendants, he met on the road a man the like of whom he had never seen before. This man was weak and thin in his body. His face was wrinkled, and his veins stood out clearly all over his body. He was toothless, bald and bent, and hardly able to walk or speak.

"Who is that man ?" said the prince to his coachman. "Why is he so thin and weak and bald and bent ? Why is he so different from other men ?"

"Sir," replied the coachman, "that man is suffering from old age. He was like you and me when he was young, but now his body has grown weak and wrinkled with age."

"Can I also become like him ?" asked the prince. "Do all men grow old ?"

"Yes, my lord," the coachman replied. "All who are born, men as well as beasts, must grow old. That is the end of all. Your father, your

wife, your friends, you yourself, will one day arrive at this last stage of life."

The prince was silent for a while and then said slowly, "Why, then, should man be so proud of youth and its pleasures ? Why should he be so thoughtless and foolish as not to realise that youth is soon defeated by old age ?"

Having said this, he ordered the coachman to return to the palace. He was greatly upset by what he had seen and heard, and sat in the coach lost in thought.

On another occasion, when the prince was similarly driving through the city, he came across a poor victim of disease. The condition of this man was as helpless and pitiable as that of the old man the prince had seen earlier. He was lying on the road. His body was weak and thin and covered with mud. His lips were dry and his eyes burned with fever.

"Who is that man ?" said the prince. "Why is he so thin and dirty ? Has he no home that he should lie on the road ? Has he no relatives and no friends that he should lie thus, alone and helpless ?"

"Sir," replied the coachman, "that man is suffering from disease. His body has grown thin with fever and dirty with mud. He had a home

and many relatives and friends, but has now been thrown out to die in the street."

"Can I also become like him?" asked the prince. "Do all men suffer from disease?"

"Yes, my lord," the coachman replied. "The rich as well as the poor, the mighty as well as the weak, all are subject to disease."

"Alas!" said the pince, "health is as short-lived, as uncertain, as youth. Why, then, should man be so proud of health?"

And he again ordered the coachman to return to the palace. He was greatly disturbed by what he had seen and heard, and sat in the coach lost in thought.

On yet another occasion, as the prince was driving through the city on his way to one of his father's gardens, he saw a dead body. It was being carried on a bier. The friends and relatives of the dead person were slowly following it, crying and sobbing, beating their breasts and covering their heads with dust.

"Who is that man?" asked the prince. "Why is his face covered with cloth? Why is he being thus carried? Why are those people crying as though they were mad?"

"Sir," replied the coachman, "that is the body of a man who is dead. They are carrying it to

be burned. His friends and relatives are crying and beating their breasts and covering their heads with dust because they are mad with grief."

"Can I also die ?" asked the prince. "Do all men die ?"

"Yes, my lord," the coachman replied. "All those who are born, men as well as beasts, must die, as they must grow old. That is the end of all. Your father, your wife, your friends, you yourself, shall die one day, as this man has died today."

The prince remained silent for a while, and then said slowly, as though thinking loudly to himself, "Ah! Woe to youth, which must be destroyed by old age ! Woe to health, which must be destroyed by so many diseases ! Woe to this life, where a man remains so short a while ! If there were no old age, no disease, no death ! If these could be made captive for ever! "

So saying, he yet again ordered the coachman to return to the palace. He was greatly saddened by what he had seen and heard, and sat in the coach lost in deep thought.

He thought and thought, but the problem appeared to be beyond solution. He wanted to

conquer death and save man from disease and old age; but he did not know how this could be done.

Then, another chance meeting one day on the roads of his own city put an end to all his hesitation. He was driving in his golden chariot to one of the royal gardens when he saw a mendicant. This man was dressed in saffron clothes and carried an alms-bowl in his hand. He looked very calm and contented. The prince wondered how one who knew that there were things like disease and old age and death in this world, could be so calm and contented.

"Who is this man ?" asked the prince.

"Sir," the coachman replied, "this man is a mendicant. He has renounced all worldly pleasures. He wants to conquer himself. He has no passions in his heart, and no possessions in this world. He begs what he eats, and leads a life of prayer."

"This," exclaimed the prince, "is the life for me ! This is the true life, the life that may lead me to my goal."

Thus he made up his mind to become a mendicant, and sought the permission of his father to renounce the world.

IV

Key-Question : *How did Gautama leave his father's palace ?*

The King was taken aback and said in a voice full of grief and entreaty, "Ask for my kingdom, and I will give it to you. Ask for my life, and I will give it to you. But do not ask for my permission to renounce the world, for that I cannot give."

"I promise not to renounce the world," said the prince, "if you can protect me and mine from disease, old age and death, if you can, with all your power, make this kingdom and all its splendours everlasting."

The King said nothing, for he could do neither of these things. But he ordered a number of people to keep watch over the prince, and he arranged gay festivities to celebrate the birth of his grandson. He did not want that his only son should go to the forest at such a young age.

But the prince had made up his mind, and nothing could hold him back.

So one night, when all the guards were asleep, the prince ordered his groom to bring his horse. The groom was surprised, but he obeyed the order. The prince first went to the bed-room of

his wife. Gopa lay there on her couch sound asleep with the new-born baby by her side. The prince cast one last look at them, and then left the palace, attended by his groom. They travelled in silence all through the night. Then the prince halted. He took off his rich clothes and ornaments and gave them, with the horse, to his groom. Then he ordered the groom to go back to Kapilvastu.

V

Key-Question : *How did Gautama become the Enlightened One ?*

He first went to Vaishali to gather wisdom at the feet of a famous Brahman teacher. But all that the Brahman could teach him left him unsatisfied. He then went to Rajagriha to see if another Brahman philosopher, who lived there, could satisfy him. But his search was in vain for the philosophy of the Brahmans could not show him the way to *mukti* or deliverance. So he left Rajagriha with five of the Brahman's disciples who chose to accompany him. Gautama then decided to subject his body to severe penance. He retired to a small village near Gaya and remained there in solitude for six long years. But light would still not come to him. So he concluded that this was not the right way to win

peace of mind. One may undergo penances and reduce the body to a skeleton, but that does not take one even one step nearer the goal of salvation.

So he gave up the penances. His five companions, who had followed him from Rajagriha, now left him, thinking that he had fallen from the true path. But Gautama was not disturbed by this. Nor did he give up his own search for an answer to all those problems that had puzzled him for so long. He thought and meditated, all by himself; and one day light came to him and peace descended upon his soul. Old age and disease and death were no longer mysteries to him, for he had now discovered the secret of salvation or *nirvana.*

VI

Key-Question : *What did Gautama do after his enlightenment ?*

He now set out on his mission of service, going about from one place to another, and preaching his message wherever he went. First of all he came to Varanasi and found out the five companions who had earlier left him. He told them what he had discovered, and they were so deeply impressed that they became his first disciples. By the time he paid a visit to Rajagriha

the number of his disciples had become very large. King Bimbasara of Rajagriha was soon converted and thus Gautama, the Buddha, marched on his career of conquest, conquering the souls of people with the weapons of love and non-violence. He also went to Kapilvastu and converted most of the Shakyas, including his own wife and son, to his faith.

His mission having been completed, he died peacefully at the ripe age of eighty, 488 years before Christ. After his death his religion spread with even greater force till it covered not only the whole of India but also Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Tibet, China, Japan, Korea and Mongolia. It reached westwards also as far as Greece and Egypt. In India numerous memorials were raised by his followers, and places where he had lived and preached and died became places of pilgrimage for his followers. Even today, about 2,500 years after his death, his religion is followed by 45,50,00,000 people throughout Asia.

He was a great teacher, the greatest Indian prophet whose life and deeds are recorded by history. He was born with a mission, and fulfilled it. He fought a noble war to free mankind from sin and disease and old age and death, and won it.



THE WARRIOR OF MEWAR
who always held his head as high
as in this picture.

Freedom from Domination

2

THE WARRIOR OF MEWAR

I

Key-Question : *Who was Maharana Pratap Singh? How was his early life passed?*

Freedom is dear to all, but there are some for whom it is dearer than anything else. It is the very breath of life for them. They can bear all hardships for its sake; they can do without food but must have their freedom. Their motto, their religion, always is : "Give me liberty or give me death."

Every page of the history of Mewar is full of the heroic deeds of such lovers of freedom. They never established empires, never went out to conquer others. But when it came to their own freedom, even their ladies preferred the burning pyre to slavery and humiliation.

One of the bravest sons of this land of brave people was Maharana Pratap Singh. He belonged to the noble Rajput clan of Sisodias, and was the grandson of the famous Maharana Sangram Singh, or Rana Sanga, who had given many a battle to the invading Moghul armies of Babar.

He could not, it is true, prevail against the Moghuls who were pouring into India like sea-waves. But the lion-hearted Rana had given to the invader some of the most anxious moments of his life, and earned immortality for himself by his bravery and sacrifice. He was succeeded by his son, Udai singh, who did not prove worthy of him. This faint-hearted son of a brave father could not hold Chittor against the might of Akbar and fled for safety among the Airaval hills where he founded a new city called Udaipur after his own name.

It was here that the early life of Pratap Singh was passed. He wandered among the forests and hills around Udaipur, hunting whatever animals he could find there. Thus he grew up into a fine, sturdy youth, as fearless as the king of the forest, and as firm as the hills around him. He was a true Rajput, like his famous grandfather.

II

Key-Question : *How did Maharana Pratap prepare for his struggle against the Moghuls ?*

When Pratap Singh succeeded his father as the ruler of Mewar, he found that he was a king without a kingdom. He had no capital, for

Chittor was in the hands of the Moghuls. He had no army worth the name, and no money to raise a fresh one with. Even the most faithful of his followers had lost heart. Repeated defeats at the hands of the Moghuls and the cowardly example set by Udai Singh had crushed their spirits.

So the great task before Pratap Singh was first of all to set right the affairs of his own small kingdom, and then to drive the Moghuls out of Mewar. He was not the man to remain satisfied with Udaipur and a few other hill-forts. He could not bear to see his motherland, his dear Chittor, in the hands of the enemy. His Rajput pride would not allow him to rest as long as there was a single Moghul soldier left on the sacred soil of Mewar.

This was, no doubt, an uphill task, for Pratap Singh had only the desire, but no means, to drive the Moghuls out of Mewar. He had neither the army nor the money necessary for the achievement of his ambition. Moreover, there was no enthusiasm left in his followers to fight for freedom.

Pratap Singh decided first of all to handle his followers. So he called the chief among them together and thus addressed them:

"This land of ours," said he, "was made glorious by the brave deeds of our ancestors. Every inch of it is sacred to us because they washed it with their blood. Should we allow it to be trampled by the feet of foreigners?"

"No, no," they all said with one voice.

"Let us then take an oath today that we shall know no rest till we have freed it. Let us go into mourning, for our land is not free, and remain in mourning till we have freed it. Let us give up all comfort, all luxury and enjoyment, till Chittor is ours. Let us not use utensils of gold and silver, let us not sleep in comfortable beds, till we have rid our land of foreigners. Let us take this oath here and now, and keep it like true Rajputs."

As the Rana said this, his voice was trembling with sorrow and rage. His face was flushed and his eyes seemed to be on fire. His hearers too were deeply moved. The Rajput blood in their veins was roused and they all promised, sword in hand, that they would either make their country free or perish in the attempt.

And now Pratap Singh had a band of faithful and brave followers with him who helped him in building up a small but fearless army. This done, he was now in a position to begin his

preparations in right earnest. The first thing to be done was to make his own small kingdom safe from attack. So he shifted his capital from Udaipur to Kumbhalner. He cut off all wasteful expenditure and reorganised his *jagirs* so as to ensure more income to the royal treasury, and with the money thus saved, he enlarged and improved his army. Moreover, large areas once covered with green fields and orchards were turned into deserts, roads and wells were destroyed and the people living in these areas were moved to safer places behind the hills. All this was done to make an attack by the armies of Akbar very difficult, if not impossible.

III

Key-Question : *What were the events leading to the battle of Haldighati?*

But Akbar never wanted to send his armies to fight against the Rajputs in the hills of Aravali. He had great respect for the brave Rajputs. He had seen them fighting and knew very well that they took a very heavy price for their lives. So he decided to leave Pratap alone, and try other methods of gaining his objective. He sought and won the friendship of Raja Bhagwandas of Amber and of his brave son, Man Singh,

whom he made a General of the Moghul army King Maldeva of Marwar was similarly won over, and when the smaller Rajput rulers saw the bigger ones joining the camp of Akbar, they also followed suit.

Pratap Singh was the only one who did not do so. He could never bring disgrace upon the fair name of his ancestors by becoming a courtier of Akbar. He hated those who had done so. He considered them as outcastes and broke off all relations with them. Nor could he make a secret of this hatred, whatever the consequences. And he did have to pay very dearly for it.

Once it so happened that Man Singh who, as you know. was a General in the Moghul army, was on his way back after his wars in the Deccan. He decided to pay a visit to Kumbhalner for, whatever their differences, he had a very great regard for the Rana. Pratap Singh received him in a manner befitting his dignity, and also arranged a feast in his honour. But he absented himself from the feast pretending headache, because he could not sit and eat with an outcaste. Man Singh was no fool. He saw through the excuse and guessed the real cause of the Rana's absence. He naturally felt very much insulted. "I will soon come back," said he, rising from his

seat, "with suitable cure for the Rana's headache."

"Do come," replied the Rana, entering. "Do come whenever you like and you will find us ready to welcome you."

And Man Singh did come back—with a huge Moghul army. Akbar had been waiting for this opportunity of making one Rajput fight against another. Now that it had come, he did not want to lose it. So he sent a huge army under Prince Salim with Man Singh and Mahawat Khan as his advisers.

And true to his promise, the Rana too was ready to welcome them. He had with him a small army of twenty-two thousand faithful men ready to lay down their lives in the service of their motherland.

IV

Key-Question : *How was the battle of Haldighati fought and with what results* ?

The two armies met on the battlefield of Haldighati. The Moghul army was much bigger in size, and Man Singh was thirsting for revenge. The Rajputs were fewer but every one of them was determined to fight and die for freedom.

Then the bloody battle began. The Rana set an example of bravery and courage which his

men gladly followed. Mounted on his beloved horse, Chetak, he was here, there, and everywhere, killing the enemy and encouraging his own men. He wanted to be face to face with Man Singh, But Man Singh was too clever to come before him in battle.

The battle went on. The Rana was now wounded and tired. But he continued to fight like a mad man. He knew that his handful of Rajputs could not stand up for long against the superior numbers of the enemy. But even this thought only served to make him more determined not to turn back. He had now no thought of his own safety and rode on bravely where the danger was the greatest, till at last he found himself surrounded by Moghul soldiers on all sides and without any escape or help. They were attacking him from all sides and his fall was now a matter of moments. Just then, one of the Rajput chiefs, Sardar Jhala by name, who happened to be fighting nearby, saw the Rana in this desperate condition. He at once rushed to the help of the Rana and very cleverly managed to divert the attention of the enemy towards himself. He paid for it with his life but the Rana was saved. A nobler example of courage, faithfulness and self-sacrifice would indeed be difficult to find.

The battle ended in victory for the Moghuls. The sacred earth of Mewar had once again been washed red in the blood of 14,000 martyrs, and the brave Rajputs had once again shown that they knew how to die for freedom.

The Rana had made good his escape. He now took shelter in the fort of Kumbhalner, for Udaipur had fallen into Moghul hands. But Man Singh was determined not to allow any rest to the Rana. He waited for the rainy season to be over, and then attacked Kumbhalner. Another fierce battle took place at the end of which the Rana was compelled to abandon his capital and fly for safety. He went from one fort to another and the Moghuls followed him, till he was surrounded on all sides and had no place to go to. But even this could not make him give up the struggle. He only changed his tactics and continued the fight from his hiding places in the hills, making surprise attacks and running away after inflicting heavy losses on the enemy.

V

Key-Question: *Why did Maharana Pratap write his letter of regret to Akbar?*

This went on for quite a long time till the Moghuls, not used to this type of fighting, were

tired of it. The Rana also was not very happy. He had his own worries. He was, for example, running short of men and materials. Besides, he had to be constantly moving from one place to another for safety. But he was even now as firm as a rock. He would eat wild fruits and roots, or go hungry if nothing was available. He would hold court in a cave among the hills, if no hall was available. But he would never submit to the domination of another.

But there were occasions when his trials proved too much even for him. He could himself bear any amount of suffering but his heart bled to see his little ones suffering with him.

One day, he was sitting in the forest lost in deep thought. He must have been thinking, as you can well imagine, about the freedom of his beloved motherland. His little daughter was playing near him, dancing with joy because she had been given a piece of bread to eat. All of a sudden, a wild cat emerged from somewhere, snatched the piece of bread from the girl's hand, and ran away into the darkness of the forest. The girl began to weep very bitterly because there was no more bread and she was feeling very hungry.

Tears appeared in the eyes of the Rana. He could bear it no longer. He at once sat down and wrote a letter to Akbar asking for mercy and pardon. Fortunately for him, even Akbar could not believe that the letter was really from Maharana Pratap Singh. He thought it was a joke played by some enemy of the Rana. Pratap Singh too repented having written it. But he also realised that it would be foolish to struggle against the might of Akbar when he himself had no resources, no men or money, to fight with. So he decided to bid good-bye to the land of his ancestors, and march westwards to establish a new kingdom on the bank of the river Indus.

VI

Key-Question: *How did Maharana Pratap win back his kingdom? Why was he not satisfied with his success?*

So the Rana gathered together such of his relatives and followers as were yet alive, cast a last look towards Chittor, and set out on his long journey. They crossed the Aravali hills and stood on the edge of the desert which they had to cross before reaching Sind. But this was never to be, for an event took place in the meantime which filled his heart with fresh courage and brought him back to Mewar.

There was an old Rajput chief named Bhamashah whose ancestors had been ministers of Chittor. He had quite a large amount of money and valuables lying safely at his home. When he saw the Rana leaving Mewar for ever, he felt very sad. There could be no better use of his treasure, he thought, than to be placed at the feet of the Rana. So he brought out the treasure and presented it to the Rana, saying, "My lord, what will I do with this wealth when you are gone? It was earned by my ancestors from Chittor. It belongs to you. I too belong to you."

It was, indeed, a glorious example of devotion and self-sacrifice, and tears of joy appeared in the eyes of the Rana as he gathered Bhamashah in a warm embrace.

So he turned back and raised another army with the money Bhamashah had brought in. The war with Akbar was resumed. This time the Moghuls were taken by surprise, and the Rana was stronger than they had expected. Fort after fort fell to the Rajputs till the Rana had won back almost the whole of his lost kingdom except Chittor and Ajmer. He was now once again the king of Mewar.

But Chittor was not yet free, and the Rana was not yet happy. Had he not taken a vow not to sit contented till Chittor was free?

This continued to worry him till his last moment. As he lay on his death-bed, he called his son, Amar Singh, and his brave Rajput chiefs and told them what was worrying him. He died peacefully only after they had repeated the oath, sword in hand, to fight and die for the freedom of their beloved Mewar.

He was indeed a true fighter for freedom. As long as he lived, he was respected by all. Even the Rajput princes who had joined the camp of Akbar were proud of him. Even his great enemy, Akbar, held him in very high regard. And after his death, he has become a shining example for all those who value freedom and can make sacrifices for it.

Freedom from Slavery

3

FATHER ABRAHAM

I

Key-Question: *How did the United States of America come into being? How was slavery abolished there?*

There is no slavery today anywhere in the civilized world. But it was a very familiar thing in almost every ancient civilization. The great pyramids of Egypt were built by slave labour, and slavery was taken for granted as much by the enlightened philosophers of Greece as by the mighty emperors of Rome. By and by, however, man began to realise that the liberty of others was as important, and as valuable, as his own. He began to feel that it was wrong to keep another man his slave. Thus slavery was abolished in almost all parts of the Old World. But it continued to flourish in the New World till less than a hundred years ago, like an ugly blot on the white sheet of civilization. It cost a

fearful war and the life of one of the greatest of men to end it there. This war is known in history as the Civil War of America, and that greatest of men who laid down his life for the freedom of the slaves was Abraham Lincoln.

The older peoples of Europe, Asia and Africa were not even aware of the existence of the American continent till Columbus discovered it at the end of the fifteenth century. That is why it came to be known as the New World. Soon after its discovery, large numbers of people flocked westwards from Europe to settle in this new land with its unlimited opportunities. Colonies sprang up there, new towns arose where there were forests, and roads were built through marshes and mountains. Things went on well for some time, but then a quarrel broke out between the settlers and the British Government. The settlers did not want that laws and taxes to which they had never consented should be imposed upon them by a Government which ruled from across the Atlantic. The English Government was defeated in the war that followed, and the American colonies ceased to belong to England. They now became the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ruled by a president of their own, who was elected by the people for a term of four years at a time.

II

Key-Question: *In what circumstances was the early life of Lincoln passed?*

The colonists up to this time were living mainly in areas along the sea-coast. But now the more adventurous among them began to move inland through forests and mountains, cutting paths for themselves, surmounting barriers, and facing all sorts of dangers from wild beasts and Red Indian natives. They cut down forests, made clearings, ploughed virgin fields and constructed log cabins for themselves to live in. Life was indeed very hard for these adventurous people. Their settlements were situated in remote wildernesses. Their children had to go many a weary mile before they could find a school. They had to travel long distances before they could find a church to offer their prayers, or a market town to buy their requirements.

It was in a log cabin in one of these lonely settlements that Abraham Lincoln passed his boyhood and early youth. He was an uncommonly tall boy and must have looked rather odd in his coat and stockings of deerskin and his cowhide shoes. But he was a happy creature and always tried to help his father in cutting down trees and ploughing fields and building or repairing their

cabin. Somtimes he would be sent to buy cloth or salt or nails from the store situated six or seven miles away.

Abraham was very fond of his mother and thought her to be the most wonderful person in the world. She was fearless and could shoot wild animals as well as any man. She could dress the skin of animals and make shoes and clothes out of it. Moreover, she was so dear and loving and wise, so cheerful and so full of wonderful stories. When the day's work was done and they were all sitting before the cabin fire, she would tell them tale after tale, till Abraham and his sister Sarah were both too sleepy to remain sitting.

But she died when Abraham was only eleven years old. Of course, her little son, who was later on to become so great, could never forget her. "All that I am or hope to be," said he when he had become quite famous, "I owe to my angel mother."

About this time, some young cousins came to stay with them, and Abraham became very intimate with one of them whose name was Dennis. The two now worked and played together. Meanwhile, he was also looking after his own education as best as he could. He would

lie full length by the fireside at night reading the few books he could lay hands on. He had no pen or ink or paper or slate or pencil. The shovel of his father was made to serve for paper and as for the pencil, were there not enough pieces of burnt wood in the fireplace? He had only three books which were as dear to him as life itself. These were *Aesop's Fables, The Pilgrim's Progress,* and the *Bible.* A few others he was able to borrow from his neighbours rom time to time.

III

Key-Question: *What were the two events which proved to be the turning-points in Lincoln's life ?*

Thus Abraham grew up into an ungainly youth, six feet four inches in height, with long lean legs and arms, and a stiff mop of dark brown hair on his head.

About this time, two events took place which proved to be the turning-points in his life. The first made him a great orator and thus helped in his election as the President of the United States of America. The second touched the deepest chords of pity in his heart and inspired him to wage a holy war which was fought not to enslave

those who were free but to free those who were slaves.

He was only sixteen when he chanced to be in town on an errand. There in the Court House he heard a great and moving speech made by a lawyer in defence of his client who had been accused of murder. As Abraham listened, it suddenly dawned upon him that there was great power in human speech; and he made up his mind then and there to become a great speaker himself. From that day he began to practise speaking. He would gather his friends and address them, or have a long argument with Dennis, or speak to an audience of trees if none better happened to be available. And thus he mastered the art so well that when, later on, the occasion demanded it, he could move a thousand hearts to do and die at his word.

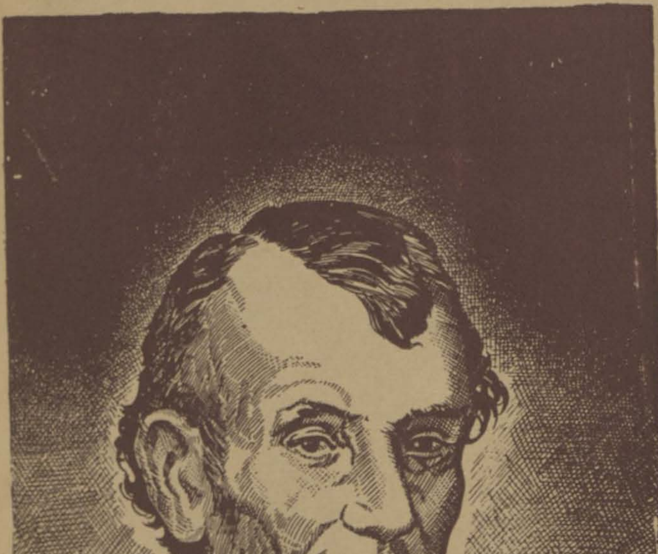
The second event occurred a little later. He had left his father's farm and built a boat for himself in which he carried goods for a neighbouring shopkeeper down the Mississippi to sell in New Orleans. As his boat touched the lower reaches of the river, he saw a strange and pitiable sight. He saw black men and women working hard in plantations and clearings on both banks of the river, or carrying enormous

Loads to or from the landing-stages. If they fumbled or stopped to wipe the sweat on their brows, the white men in charge of them would mercilessly whip them till blood came out of their bodies. Lincoln had never thought that one man could be so cruel to another. When he reached the great city of New Orleans, he saw a market where black men, women and children were being bought and sold like heads of cattle. He saw a black girl being whipped to make her run, just to show to the prospective customers how strong she was. He felt sick with anger and shame to see what man had made of man. He clenched his fist and said to himself, "Whenever I get the chance to hit at slavery, I will hit hard." And so he did, when the chance came to him.

IV

Key-Question: *How did Lincoln rise to become the President of the United States of America?*

Meanwhile, the shopkeeper for whom he carried goods was so pleased with his work that he made Abraham the manager of a store in one of the small towns called New Salem. But Abraham was not a businessman at heart. He wanted to do great and noble things, to serve his



FATHER ABRAHAM

Elected President of the United States of America in 1860, Abraham Lincoln fought a noble war to rid the world of slavery.

country and his people, to hold audiences spell-bound with his oratory, to make democracy real by bringing freedom to the slaves. He was preparing himself even now for these great tasks, for many a customer on entering the store would find Abraham lost in a book on the law or the history of the land. The only other thing he seemed to like was story-telling. He had learnt this art from his mother, and would tell one story after another to the men and women who gathered at the store in the evening to hear them. This naturally made him very popular with the people.

There is a story about this period of his life which will tell you a great deal about his character. One evening, a woman came from some distance to buy tea from his store. Abraham, perhaps because he was absorbed in something else, gave her short weight without being aware of it. She went away with her tea without even suspecting that she had been cheated in weight. Abraham discovered his error when he opened the store next morning. He at once packed up more tea and rushed out to deliver it. You can imagine the pleasant surprise of the woman. You can also imagine why people called him 'Honest Abe'.

But Honest Abe did not remain a shopkeeper for long. There were better things for him to do and, perhaps, he knew this. So he changed from one profession to another. He left shopkeeping to become a soldier, a postman, a land-surveyor and, finally, a lawyer. His early practice in speaking now proved very helpful. People crowded the courts to hear his speeches and he could move them at will. But he never used his great powers in the defence of wrong. Like our own Gandhiji, he was very careful in the choice of his clients, and accepted only those cases where he knew the accused to be innocent.

Very soon, he became well-known all over the town. People respected him for his honesty, and loved him for his moving speeches and beautiful jokes. And when the election time came, they elected him as their representative in the Assembly of their State.

Abraham made such a good job of his work in the Assembly that he was soon chosen by his State to be its member in the Congress, or the National Parliament of the United States of America. Many people, however, doubted the wisdom of this. Lincoln was still the same ungainly person, long and lean and thin, his clothes hanging loosely on his body, his pockets bulging with papers, and his black hat too old

for use by about fifty years. So these people predicted that Lincoln would fail in the bigger world of New York.

But Lincoln was not made for failure. Soon after his arrival in New York, he made a speech against slavery. And if there were some people inclined in the beginning to laugh at this long-legged, ill-dressed country lawyer, they had to revise their opinion about him before he had finished. There was not a single person in the audience who was not moved to sympathy for the slaves.

He came into greater prominence as a result of his great duel in oratory with Douglas. Douglas was, like him, a lawyer, an orator, and a member of the Congress. He wanted that every State should be free to do what it thought fit with the slaves. But Lincoln argued that every man, whatever his colour, had a right to be free and that the miseries and sorrows of the slaves were a concern of all Americans and not of particular States.

More and more people had now begun to talk about the question of slavery, and opinion on this point was sharply divided. The southern States were for the retention of slavery because the European settlers in those hot areas could not manage their vast farms without the help

of slaves. The northern States, led by Abraham Lincoln, wanted the abolition of slavery because they thought that it was wrong for one man to own another.

The nation showed its confidence in Lincoln, and gave its verdict against slavery, by electing him President of the United States in 1860. This made the southerners very uneasy. They threatened that they would withdraw from the Union and form a new state of their own if the abolition of slavery was forced upon them. Lincoln said that he would never allow this and would go even to the length of using force to keep the Union intact.

V

Key-Question: *How did Lincoln fulfil the great mission of his life ?*

The days that followed were very sad and anxious for him. He knew that if the South persisted in its attitude it would mean a Civil War, which is always the worst kind of war because in it brother fights against brother. But he was also determined to pay any price for the unity of the country.

And the war did come about. The South started it by attacking and capturing a Government fort and insulting the 'Stars and Stripes'. The

North rallied round Lincoln, and the war became a full-fledged affair. It continued for four years—four long, weary, anxious years for Lincoln. In the mean time his term as President came to an end, and the people of the North reaffirmed their faith in him by re-electing him for another term of four years.

At last, in April, 1865, the war ended in a victory for Lincoln and his noble cause of liberty for all. The whole nation heaved a sigh of relief. The Negro men and women and children freed from slavery were filled with gratitude for Father Abraham. There were rejoicings all over the land except, of course, in the South.

But Lincoln's great mission was over, and so were his days in this world. He had spent the afternoon on Good Friday, barely five days after the victory, in driving among his people. In the evening he went to the theatre. As he was sitting there in his box, intently watching the play, a man stole behind him, fired a revolver shot at Lincoln's head, and sprang on to the stage shouting, "The South is avenged. So always with tyrants."

Lincoln was dead. But he had already made himself immortal. The assassin's bullet could not undo what Lincoln had accomplished.

Freedom from Pain & Suffering

4

THE LADY WITH THE LAMP

I

Key-Question: *How was the childhood of Florence Nightingale passed ? In what did she differ from her sister and other children of her age ?*

Some people are born with a mission to fulfil. Inspired by some lofty ideal, they march along the path set apart for them by the Almighty God. They brave all difficulties, and overcome all obstacles, till a glorious chapter has been written in the history of mankind, and their own names have been rendered immortal. The world laughs at them in the beginning because it cannot understand them. But they do not care for the world's laughter. They meet discouragement at every step. But every bit of discouragement serves to goad them on to greater effort which ceases only when success has been achieved. Such noble souls are gratefully remembered by the world long after they have been dead.

Such a soul was born in this world in the year 1820 to save men from much unnecessary suffering and pain. She was called Florence because her parents, the Nightingales, happened to be in the beautiful Italian city of that name when the child was born. The Nightingales were wealthy people. They possessed a good deal of property in England including two splendid country-houses. One of these was among the Derbyshire hills where they lived during the summer. The other was situated in the warmer south where they moved for the winter. These journeys were made either in the stage-coach drawn by four splendid horses or in the family carriage which the Nightingales were rich enough to own.

Florence and her elder sister Parthenon had been born abroad while their parents were out travelling. They returned to England soon after the birth of Florence, and the two sisters began their very happy childhood at home. They had large nurseries to play in, and a large number of dolls and pets to play with. The pets included a pig, a donkey, a pony and many dogs.

But the two girls brought up under the same conditions soon began to show how their natures differed. Parthenon behaved like the true squire's

daughter. She would throw away the broken dolls, saying that they were spoiled. Florence, whose heart was full of pity, would take them up and bandage and nurse them as though they were living creatures. Parthenon was very fond of good clothes, but Florence was more interested in looking after her pets. They had always some cousins—boys and girls of their own age, or babies—staying with them. Parthenon liked to play with those of her own age, but Florence was very fond of little babies and found great pleasure in tending them.

The two sisters never went to any school but studied at home with their father. They learnt languages, including Greek, Latin and Italian, history, arithmetic, geometry and algebra. Both were fond of their lessons. Florence was so devoted to them that she would sometimes get up at four in the morning to learn them. They were also taught their music and dancing.

II

Key-Question : *Why was Florence not satisfied with the pleasures of youth ? What did she want to do ?*

Thus Florence grew up to be a young lady of seventeen. She was now tall and slim with



FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE

THE LADY WITH THE LAMP, who spent her life trying to save men from unnecessary suffering and pain.

shining brown hair and grey eyes. She was charming to all those who saw, or talked to, her but the expression on her face was often one of deep thought. Was there anything the matter with her ?

Her education was now finished. She had been abroad once again with her parents. Part of her time abroad had been spent in Paris where she talked and supped and danced with the best of the society. Back in England, her life was equally happy. There were dances and dinners, music and acting. She was introduced to London society and presented at the Court. At home, too, she had very little work to do except music, painting, embroidery and a little of supervision over the servants of whom there were many. What then was the matter with her ?

It was, briefly, that although she liked her life and enjoyed it, she was not satisfied with it. She wanted to do something useful. In her own words: "The thoughts and feelings that I have now, I can remember since I was six years old. A profession, a trade, a necessary occupation, something to fill and employ all my faculties, I have always felt essential to me, I have always longed for. The first thought I can remember and the last was nursing work."

She had nursed broken dolls and pet animals when she was a little girl. She had looked after babies when she was a little older. Even now she spent much of her time in visiting the sick in the village and comforting them. She did this work so well that when anybody in the family—an aunt or a cousin—happened to be sick, it was usually Florence who was sent for. Very often, when she was driving with her parents and they happened to pass the hospital in Salisbury, her heart would go to the men and women lying there, and she would long—in vain, of course,—to nurse them, or bandage them, or console them with soothing words. Her inability to do so made her thoughtful and sad.

III

Key-Question : *Why and by whom was Florence prevented from taking up the profession of nursing ? How did she overcome this obstacle ?*

Had Florence been born a hundred years later, there would have been no difficulty. But at that time, there were very few female nurses and they were generally low-class women given to drinking and other unclean habits. Besides, it was below the dignity of a rich man's

daughter to do any work. Her sole business was to enjoy life, to amuse herself and others and find out a suitable husband to settle with. Parthenon was doing this. All young ladies belonging to rich families were doing this. But Florence could not do this, for she was more interested in nursing than in husbands.

So she grew restless and sad. She did not find much joy in the fashionable life of dances and parties. She wanted to do something really useful in this world full of misery, pain and suffering. She consulted her friend, Dr. Howe, about it. "If I should decide to study nursing," she asked him, "and to devote my life to that profession, do you think it would be a dreadful thing?" "Not a dreadful thing at all," he replied. "I think it would be a very good thing."

Thus encouraged, she went to her mother and told her that she wanted to go to Salisbury Hospital to study nursing there. Her mother was shocked. The whole family was shocked. They could not think of their Florence becoming a nurse and earning a living. So Florence pleaded and pleaded, but all in vain.

Florence was disappointed and unhappy. But she was as dutiful as she was determined. So,

while she dutifully went about with her mother leading the life of an ordinary girl in high society, she spent her spare time in preparing herself for her great task. She always found time to read up the reports of medical and sanitary authorities, and visit work-houses and schools and hospitals.

She also made the usual trips abroad but always made it a point to visit hospitals and schools wherever she went. Thus she spent a few days at a convent school in Rome, and a few weeks as a 'Sister of Charity' in Paris. Once, in Germany, she left her mother and sister at a fashionable resort and herself entered a nursing institution to spend full three months there.

By this time Mrs. Nightingale also had come to realise that Florence was different from the rest of the family and that it would be very difficult to keep her away from the path she wanted to follow. So with tears in her eyes, she consented that Florence might, at the most, become the superintendent of a small nursing home in Harley Street.

This was not all that Florence had wanted. But it was good enough to begin with, and Florence accepted her lot, waiting and preparing for bigger things.

IV

Key-Question : *How did Florence get the big opportunity she was waiting for ?*

But she did not have to wait for long. The big opportunity for her to be useful came her way and found her well prepared. She had hardly been one year at the nursing home when one autumn morning in the year 1854, the people of England learnt that a war had broken out in far off Crimea in which England and France were fighting against the Russians. There had already taken place a fierce battle on the river Alma in which many soldiers had been killed and wounded. Many more, it was further reported, were lying in great agony, not from their wounds but from fever, starvation and neglect in the absence of proper facilities. There were only a few doctors, and no nurses, to look after the wounded and the sick. There was lack of adequate medicines, bandages and dressing materials.

When Florence read this, her tender heart was filled with great distress and pity for those who were thus suffering. Could she help ? Florence knew she could. It was, no doubt, a very brave thing to do, for in those days female nurses, especially in a military hospital on the war-front,

were unthinkable. But Florence was a woman of determination, and she had made up her mind to be helpful to the suffering soldiers in Crimea.

So she made her offer to the Government. She offered to take her own band of nurses to Crimea to look after the medical arrangements there and to provide comfort and relief to those who were suffering. Luckily for her, the Minister of War was a great friend of hers, and under his influence the Government accepted the offer. Thus did Florence Nightingale sail for Crimea with her band of thirty-eight nurses.

But she made all the necessary arrangements before doing so. The Government had told her that she would find everything there. But Florence thought that it would be better to be prepared for the worst. So she purchased a stock of all necessary things, medicines, provisions, bandages, blankets, etc. And later, she must have thanked the Almighty for this act of foresight, for she found on her arrival at Scutari that things were in an almost impossible mess.

V

Key-Question: *What were the difficulties she had to face in Crimea and how did she overcome them?*

The hospital was located in a huge building, but it was dirty, crumbling and mismanaged. It

was overrun with rats and vermin, and full of foul smell. There was no ventilation and the beds were thickly crowded together. There were no clean bed-clothes, no blankets, no napkins, no candlesticks, basins, towels, soap, etc. The stock of drugs and medicines was inadequate, and arrangements for washing and cooking were deplorable.

Florence was faced with the very difficult task of setting all this right with the help of her thirty-eight nurses. Her task was made more difficult when most of the officers there refused to co-operate with her because they would not agree to have women serving with them. It was with great difficulty that she could obtain even the scanty stores sent out by the government.

But Florence was never afraid of difficulties. She set to work immediately and soon overcame them with sheer sincerity and industry. Her first task was to make the place clean, for sick men cannot be cured in dirty surroundings. She got scrubbing brushes and sacking cloth to wash the floors with, she supplied soap and towels and knives and forks to the patients. They now had clean sheets upon their beds and clean shirts upon their bodies. They no longer

shivered with cold, for blankets had been given to them. They no longer suffered from the ravages of rats and vermin, for these had been destroyed. She made arrangements for the washing of their clothes and the supply of well-cooked, extra-nourishing food to those who needed it.

She had many difficulties to face in doing all this. The officers did not give her their full co-operation; the nurses did not like the strict rules she had made; even the patients were sometimes unwilling to obey her. But she pleaded and begged, and asserted herself when it became necessary, and thus always had her way in the end. The people there were at first bewildered by her presence, then curious to see how she managed things, then surprised by her energy and skill, and finally converted to love, nay to worship her.

VI

Key-Question: *What was the good work done by Florence Nightingale to relieve pain and suffering first in Crimea and then in England?*

Thus she managed to put things in order in the hospital. Of course, all this meant very hard work for her. She planned improvements and executed them. She fought against the authorities

for their co-operation. She supervised the actual nursing work, and in that vast hospital, with four miles of beds, she was sure to be found wherever she was needed. She would cheer up this patient and condole with that. She would sit by their bedside writing long letters on their behalf to the dear ones at home. Sometimes she had to write very sad letters on her own behalf to the friends of those who were dead. And at night, she would move about the hospital with a little lamp in her hand, like a little angel of mercy, seeing for herself that everything was right.

Nor did she neglect the intellectual and spiritual needs of the patients. She opened reading-rooms and persuaded the soldiers to spend less money on wine. She added to her burdens by undertaking to collect these savings from the soldiers and send the money along to their wives at home. In short, she changed the entire atmosphere of the place. As one of the soldiers said: "Before she came, there was cursing and swearing, but after that it was as holy as a church." They all loved her, and obeyed her, like children, and order was established where there was chaos, thanks to the Lady with the Lamp.

When everything had been set right at Scutari, this angel of mercy set out on an inspection tour

of the many small hospitals that were scattered all over the peninsula. These too she wanted to improve. It was a very difficult journey for a frail woman like Florence for, in the absence of better means of conveyance, she had often to walk or ride on horseback for hours together along mountainous paths covered with snow. But Florence went on and on, unmindful of the difficulties, till she could go no further. Her strength gave way, and she had a very bad attack of fever. When the fever left her, she was so weak that everybody advised her to return to England for the sake of her own health. But Florence would never agree to quit her post as long as there was any life left in her. Fortunately, owever, the war soon came to an end and Florence was enabled to return home.

Her fame had reached England long before she did, and the people wanted to give her a befitting welcome. But Florence did not want much fuss to be made about her. Besides, she was still very weak. So she sought the quiet shelter of her home to nurse back her failing strength. The country showed its gratitude to her by raising a fund and presenting to her the sum of £ 44,000. But Florence did not want any money for herself, so she used the whole

amount to found a hospital and a nursing home in London.

But the greatest work of her life was yet to be performed. She could never forget the dreadful conditions she had seen in the hospital at Scutari. So she now made a bid to improve the whole medical service of the army, in peace-time as well as during war. She had once again to face great opposition from those in authority. But this time she had a whole army of devoted supporters, and was, at last, successful in her object.

Her good work was not confined to army hospitals. With her book called *Notes on Hospitals*, and with the Training School for Nurses which she had founded, she revolutionised the whole conception of sick-bed attendance and the profession of nursing. In fact, every decent hospital that we see today, every good nurse who consoles with her sympathy or comforts with her skill a patient in great pain, is a living memorial to the good work done by Florence Nightingale.

She lived up to the ripe age of ninety, and will live till eternity in the memory of mankind, for she was a true woman, a true Christian, and a true fighter for freedom from pain or suffering where it is unnecessary.

Freedom from Untruth & Violence

5

THE SAINT OF SABARMATI

I

Key-Question : *In what does the uniqueness of Gandhiji lie ?*

The history of mankind is a long story of bloody wars, and its most prominent figures are those who conquered other countries or defended their own against foreign invasions. The weapons with which they fought have differed from age to age, but the sword of Alexander killed as surely as the tanks and bombs of Hitler. To our country, however, goes the honour of having produced a great fighter and conqueror who fought with unique weapons and won unique victories.

He was a frail-looking man who shook a mighty Empire to its very foundations. He was small in body, but possessed a heart as wide as the universe and a soul as lofty as the sky. He wore a loin-cloth and lived in a cottage, but his state was kingly and the richest and the highest attended upon him. He was called 'the naked Fakir of India', but he ruled supreme over the

heart and mind of his country. He never carried a gun or a sword and was yet a great warrior; he never fought a battle and yet won great victories; he never headed an army and was yet a great conqueror, for he conquered the heart of his enemy. He won a great victory against General Smuts for the rights of the Indian settlers in South Africa. He won a greater victory against the might of the British Empire for the freedom of his own country. The greatest of his victories was won against narrowness, prejudice, wrong and hatred. And his weapons throughout were those of Truth, Love and Non-violence.

II

Key-Question: *What were the early influences on the character of Gandhiji?*

He was known all over the world as Mahatma Gandhi, for he thought and acted and lived like a saint. His own countrymen called him 'Bapu', for they loved and respected and obeyed him like his own children. His full name was Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi.

He was born on October 2, 1869, at Porbandar in Kathiawad. His father, Kaba Gandhi, was Diwan in the state of Rajkot. His mother, who was the fourth wife of Kaba, was a well-informed, God-fearing woman. She was largely

responsible for making him what he ultimately became. He was the youngest son of his parents and, therefore, his mother's favourite. She used to tell him many stories of Hindu religion and tradition. The two stories which produced the greatest effect upon his mind were those of Harishchandra and Shravankumar. Harishchandra, as you probably know, sacrificed his all for the sake of Truth and Duty. Even today, when we have to give the highest praise to somebody, we say: 'He is as truthful as the king Harishchandra'. From his story Gandhiji learnt that Truth and Duty are priceless things. The story of Shravankumar taught him the valuable lesson of service and sacrifice.

III

Key-Question : *When did Gandhiji take the vow of truth ? How did he keep it ?*

He was married, like most Hindu boys of his time, at the early age of thirteen. About the same time, he also took the vow of truth. Truth for him was not merely the opposite of telling lies; it included all that is upright and moral in action as well as in thought. His whole life from now onwards was a story of his experiments with truth. There is a very interesting

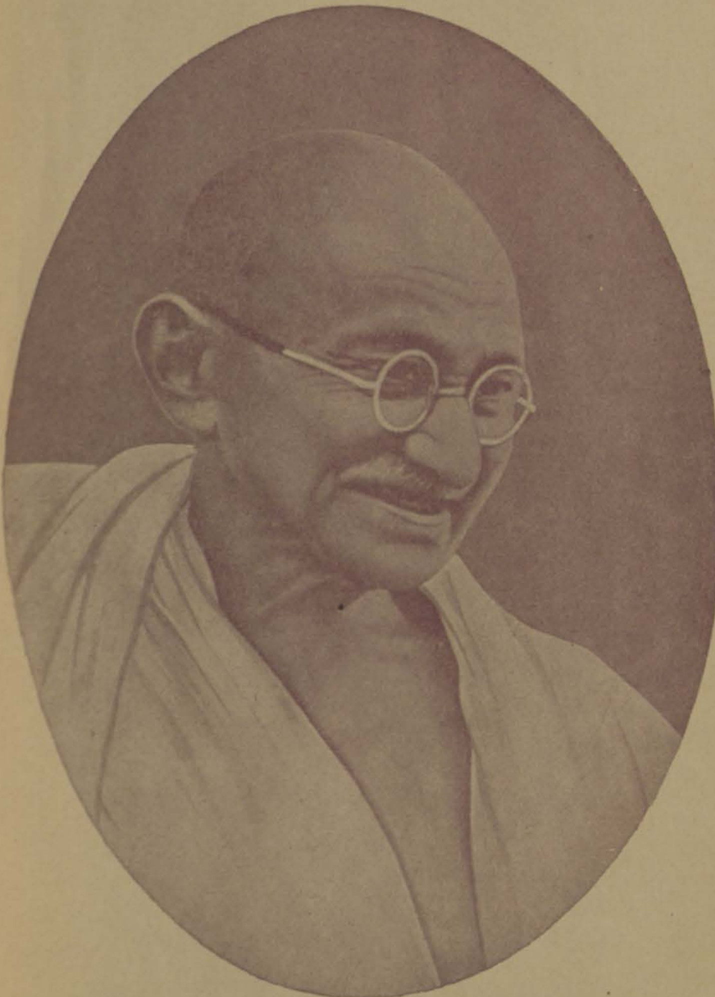
story narrated by Gandhiji himself in his autobiography called *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*, which clearly shows his great love of truth even when he was a student at school. Here it is in his own words :

"There is an incident which occurred at an examination during my first year at the High School, and which is worth recording. Mr. Giles, the Educational Inspector, had come on a visit of inspection. He had set us five words to write as a spelling exercise. One of the words was 'kettle'. I had mis-spelt it. The teacher tried to prompt me with the point of his boot, but I would not be prompted. It was beyond me to see that he wanted me to copy the spelling from my neighbour's slate, for I thought that the teacher was there to supervise us against copying. The result was that all the boys except myself were found to have spelt each word correctly. Only I had been stupid. The teacher tried later to bring this stupidity home to me but without effect. I never could learn the art of *copying*."

On another occasion, Gandhiji was persuaded by some of his boy friends to eat meat. He knew that his parents were very orthodox and would never permit him to do so. But his friends told him that it was the patriotic duty of

all Indians to eat meat so that they might become strong. Gandhiji was convinced that a reform along these lines was very necessary for the Hindu society. So he decided to eat meat in secret. They went to a lonely spot by the river, and there Gandhiji had his first and last taste of meat. He did not like it even then, but later on he was so sorry over what he had done that he made up his mind to make a clean breast of it to his parents.

Gandhiji was never a very brilliant scholar at school. But he was always honest and hard-working, and managed to join college at Bhavnagar after passing his Matriculation Examination. About this time it was decided, on the advice of a friend of the family, to send Gandhiji to England to study law there. This was about 70 years ago, when any Indian who dared to cross the seas was given up as an out-caste by Hindu society. But Gandhiji went to England in spite of the hue and cry raised by the people of his caste. He carried in his mind the determination to stick to the path of truth and duty. In his box he had a copy of the *Bhagwad Gita* which gave him courage and comfort whenever he was in difficulty.



THE SAINT OF SABARMATI

He laid down his life in man's glorious fight for freedom from untruth and violence.

He stayed in England for about four years. During this time his principles and vows were put to a very severe test. He had, for example, taken a vow before his mother that he would never touch meat or wine. But his friends in England said that both these things were necessary for health in the cold climate of that place. It was his iron will and his sense of duty that kept him loyal to his vows.

Meanwhile, some new influences were moulding his character and confirming him in his views. He had met Mrs. Besant and some other Theosophists and through them developed an interest in Hindu sacred literature. He had also studied the Bible and was much impressed by its insistence on tolerance and returning good for evil. Later, when he came in touch with the sacred books of other religions, he found that they all agreed in praising virtue and condemning vice, and then he said that all religions of the world are like different roads leading to one and the same God.

IV

Key-Question : *Why did Gandhiji go to South Africa? What Kind of treatment did he meet there?*

On the completion of his studies he was called to the Bar, and returned to India. He tried

to set up practice here but it was not much of a success. He was very happy, therefore, when a firm of merchants employed him to go out to South Africa to fight out a case on their behalf. But this trip to South Africa changed the whole course of his life, and the man of law became a rebel and a fighter for noble causes and a leader of the common people.

There was quite a large population of Indians in South Africa. They were mostly shopkeepers or workers in the mines. Some of them had acquired much money and were very well off. But the European inhabitants looked down upon them. In the province of Natal especially, the Indian community had to suffer much humiliation at their hands.

Gandhiji had his first taste of this racial arrogance soon after his arrival in Durban. When he attended court on the first day in connection with his case, the white magistrate stared at him for some time and then ordered him to remove his turban. Gandhiji could not bear this insult and left the court-room in protest.

On another occasion, soon afterwards, he got his second dose of humiliation. He was travelling on a train with a first-class ticket in his pocket. But then a white passenger entered the

compartment. He did not like the idea of sitting with a 'black coolie.' He brought this fact to the notice of some railway officials one of whom came to Gandhiji and said, "Come along, you must go to the van compartment."

"But I have a first-class ticket," Gandhiji protested.

"That doesn't matter," replied the official. "I tell you, you must go to the van compartment."

"I tell you that I was permitted to travel in this compartment at Durban and I insist on going in it," said Gandhiji.

"No, you won't," said the official. "You must leave this compartment or I shall have to call a policeman to pull you out."

"Yes, you may. I refuse to get out voluntarily," said Gandhiji.

The constable was duly called, Gandhiji was pushed out of the compartment and his luggage followed him.

V

Key-Question : *What did Gandhiji do to improve the condition of the Indian community in South Africa ?*

Gandhiji felt indignant. It was like a challenge to the whole Indian community and Gandhiji

decided to accept it. He gave up his intention of returning to India, and set before himself the very difficult task of improving the lot of the Indian settlers in South Africa. He studied the problem, organised the Indian community, and began his movement. But this movement was all along peaceful and non-violent. The European community was enraged, and threatened him with grave consequences. But Gandhiji refused to be afraid. He was mobbed, beaten and insulted, but he never lost heart or temper, for the Bible had taught him that if he was hit on one cheek he should himself offer the other for similar treatment. On one occasion, one of his own followers, a Pathan named Mir Alam, attacked and injured Gandhiji. But when he was arrested, Gandhiji pleaded in his behalf, saying that he had no charge to make against Mir Alam. The Pathan was so deeply moved that he became a life-long disciple of Gandhiji.

Thus the movement of non-violent non-co-operation and civil disobedience—to which Gandhiji gave the name of *Satyagraha*—went on for many years. Men and women in thousands were arrested and imprisoned. But the movement did not weaken, and the government

of South Africa was forced to climb down and accept the Indian demands.

With this struggle in South Africa, the first part of Gandhiji's political career also came to an end, and he returned to India the richer for two things, viz., the spirit of service which had now been put to the test, and that weapon of great power--*Satyagraha*.

VI

Key-Question : *How and with what weapons did Gandhiji fight for the freedom of India?*

When Gandhiji arrived back in India, the conditions here were far from satisfactory. The people were groaning under the iron heels of British rule. They needed a leader to fight on their behalf, and Gandhiji proved to be just the man they wanted.

Thus Gandhiji took up the leadership of the country. At first, he tested his weapon of *Satyagraha* in one or two small movements. He fought with it for the abolition of the indenture system of labour, and won his point. Then he came to Champaran in Bihar to fight the battle of workers in indigo plantations, and win it.

Then he applied his weapon to bigger issues and started a movement against the Government.

It was to begin with an all-India strike. In Jallianwalla Bagh in Amritsar, however, a huge but peaceful crowd of strikers was mercilessly beaten and fired at as a result of which many people died and many others were injured. This act of inhuman cruelty will always be remembered in Indian history as the Amritsar Massacre. It made Gandhiji very sad and, to the great disappointment of many of his followers, he called off the movement.

(Thus he launched and led a number of movements from time to time, all directed against the British Government in India and all marked by non-violence. He suspended them when he found that his people were becoming violent, and started them again when the situation was favourable. When some serious act of violence had actually been committed, as in Chauri Chaura, he would repent for the misdeeds of his followers by undertaking long fasts. His motto ever was : 'Hate the sin and not the sinner.' And so he loudly proclaimed that his struggle was not against the Britishers but against British rule in India.

In the course of this struggle, Gandhiji, along with his colleagues of the Congress, was

repeatedly arrested and imprisoned. But the whole country was behind him, and every new movement proved to be more popular, and successful, than the preceding one.

The final 'Quit India' movement was launched in 1942. He now demanded that the British rule should be withdrawn from India at once, and that all power should be given back to the Indians. But the British Government did not heed his words, and he was arrested in Bombay along with other leaders. This was his last term of imprisonment and proved to be a severe trial. During it he observed a fast for twenty-one days, his beloved friend and follower, Mahadev Desai, died, and his wife, Kasturba, was also lost to him.

But Gandhiji was not bowed down, for the 'Quit India' movement was spreading all over the country as no other movement had ever spread before. Meanwhile, the end of the second World War in 1945 left England very weak and the international situation combined with the growing strength of Indian nationalism to secure the freedom of our country. Gandhiji, the Bhishma of our age, had fulfilled his vow of many years ago; he had freed his country from foreign rule.

VII

Key-Question : *How did Gandhiji achieve Hindu-Muslim unity ?*

But the freedom of India also brought about its partition, which was a very bitter pill for Gandhiji to swallow. He had always pleaded for Hindu-Muslim unity because he firmly believed that the country could prosper only when the two communities lived peacefully together. But the worshipper of non-violence and champion of Hindu-Muslim unity had to see not only the partition of the country on communal lines but also the mass killings which accompanied this partition. His very soul must have bled to see Hindus and Muslims killing each other like beasts of the forest. He went from one corner of the country to another, to Noakhali, Calcutta and Delhi, trying to pacify the angry monster of communal madness.

But now the end was near. The fate of Jesus Christ and of Abraham Lincoln awaited him. On January 30, 1948, while coming out of Birla House in New Delhi to address his daily prayer meeting, he was shot dead by an assassin whom Pandit Nehru described as a 'mad man'.

His death, however, accomplished his object. It washed away, with his sacred blood, all the bitterness between Hindus and Muslims, in India at least. The two communities are now living together in peace, and the country is slowly but surely marching towards prosperity. And all this we owe to this saint-warrior, this unique fighter against untruth and violence, who with his weapon of *Satyagraha* made us free and with his message of truth and love told us how to be great and good.

Freedom from War

6

THE PROPHET OF PEACE

I

Key-Question : *What is the secret of Pandit Nehru's greatness ?*

Who in India does not know Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru ? Most of you probably saw him and heard his speeches. If you did, you must also have come under his magic spell. There was such power in his words, such attraction in his personality, that nobody who saw or heard him could escape coming under his influence. It was so, most probably, because he spoke the mind of a rising nation that is destined to rise higher and higher. The friend and guide of the older generation, the idol of our youth, and the beloved 'uncle' of all the young ones, he was one of the greatest statesmen of the world, loved by his own people and respected by all.

He rose so high because he was always ready to dare and to do. His capacity for work knew no end. When you read more about his

life you will find that it was full of activity, for idleness bored him as nothing else did. He has himself given a very interesting account of it in his *Autobiography* which was written, curiously enough, during one of his many terms of imprisonment.

II

Key-Question : *Where and how was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru educated ?*

He was born on November 14, 1889, in a family of rich Kashmiri Brahmans. His father, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, was the foremost lawyer of his time. His knowledge of law was so great that even the Government sought and respected his views. He lived in Allahabad like a prince, and the parties which he gave from time to time were envied even by the European rulers of the country.

The only son of a rich father, Jawaharlal was naturally brought up in all the comfort that money could buy and all the love that parents could give. As he grew up, a European tutor was engaged to teach him at home. It was this tutor, an Irishman, who taught him to love books and like reading. When Jawahar was

fifteen years old, his father thought it was now time for him to be sent to school. But he wanted to give the best education to his son which, unfortunately, was not available in Indian schools. So he took the boy along with him to England where Jawahar was admitted in Harrow, one of the best public schools there. After about three years there, Jawahar joined the University of Cambridge for higher studies.

He was, unlike most other students of the University, keenly interested in the political affairs of the world. There is a story told about his University days which will show you how he was even then preparing himself for further greatness. At that time the Liberal Party had come into power in England. One day, a professor put a question about this Liberal Government to Jawahar's class. Most of his class-mates, you may well imagine, were English boys. It was their country, and the Liberal ministry was a matter with which they were directly concerned. But none of them could answer the professor's question. Then Jawahar got up and told them all about it, including the names of the ministers, the kind of men they were and the things England and the world expected from them.

Jawahar also maintained close touch with the events that were happening at the time in India. When he read in the newspapers about the *Swadeshi* movement that had been started here, his heart was filled with great pride and pleasure; and he felt a keen desire to come back and take an active part in the agitation. The writings and speeches of Lokmanya Tilak especially had a great influence upon him.

But you will be very much surprised to learn that in those days Jawaharlal was afraid to speak from the platform. He was rather shy by nature. He could discuss any matter with friends; on such occasions he was usually very brilliant, but when it came to speaking before an audience, he could do absolutely nothing. There was a rule at Cambridge which made it compulsory for every student to deliver at least one speech in six months. The many clubs and debating societies of the University were meant for this, and those who failed to comply had to pay a fine. Jawaharlal paid the fine, but never made any speech. And this very man today enjoys the distinction of having addressed the largest audience ever addressed by man, on the occasion of Gandhiji's last rites at Allahabad.

Thus he took his B.A. Honours degree from the University and then began to study law with the intention of following in the footsteps of his great father. When these studies were complete, he sailed for India and landed in Bombay a Barrister-at-law with Indian blood in his veins and foreign clothes upon his body.

III

Key-Question : *How was Pandit Nehru drawn to politics* ?

He came back to Allahabad and set up practice there, waiting for success to come to him. But he did not find much joy in this kind of life. There were a few parties, no doubt; and sometimes the gentry of the city would gather to celebrate a wedding or a farewell. Beyond this there was no social or cultural activity in which he could take part. He was full of energy and wanted to do something. He simply could not remain idle. So he looked around and saw that there was some scope for work in the political field.

Thus the aristocratic barrister was drawn to politics. He attended the annual session of the Indian National Congress in 1912, and came in

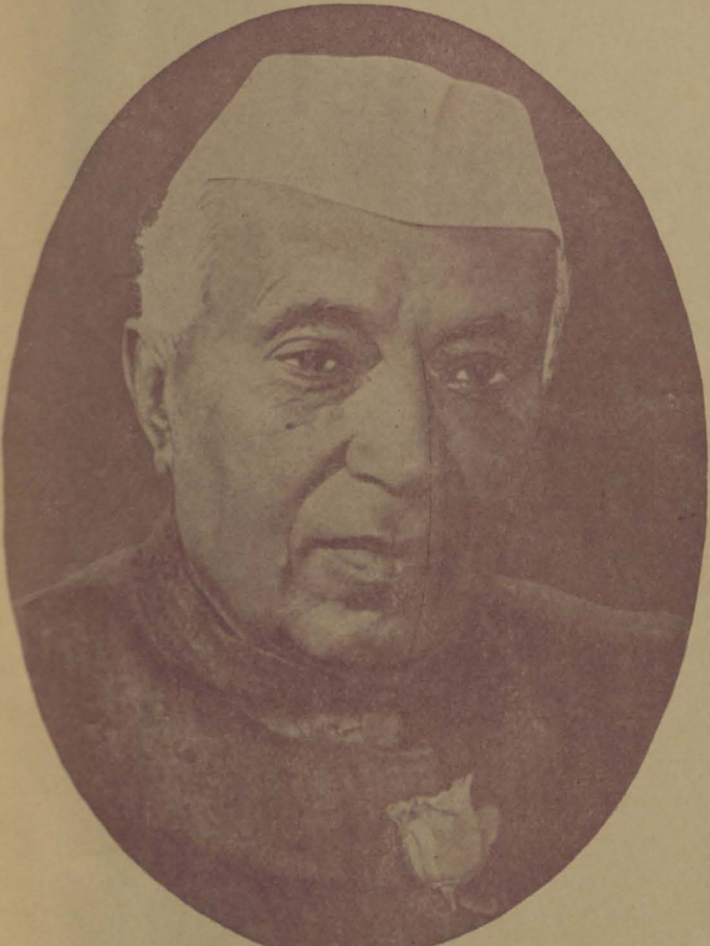
contact with the nationalist leaders. But his heart, eager for action, was not fully satisfied, for the Congress in those days was yet a 'loyal' organization and its sessions used to be just annual functions which gave one an opportunity to deliver speeches and meet people from other provinces.

So Jawaharlal did not join the Congress. But things were moving in such a way that he could not remain aloof from the political life of the country. He could not bear to see his own countrymen insulted and looked down upon by the foreign rulers of the country. He could not contain himself when the Government, in 1915, imposed restrictions on the expression of views by individuals. He was so angry that he even addressed a public meeting organised by the citizens of Allahabad to protest against this order of the Government. This, incidentally, was his maiden speech.

About this time also, he met Mahatma Gandhi for the first time during the Congress session at Lucknow. This meeting proved to be the turning-point in Jawaharlal's life, for the influence of Mahatma Gandhi made him what he rose to be.

But the story of how he actually joined the Congress is very interesting. We have already seen that he was thirsting for action. The opportunity came his way when Gandhiji started his *Satyagraha* movement in 1921. Jawaharlal was very happy and wanted to take part in the movement. But there was a huge mountain standing in his way. His father would not have him do anything of the sort because he did not like the idea of his son going to jail. When Jawaharlal insisted, the matter was placed before Gandhiji for his advice. Gandhiji said that it was the duty of a son to respect the wishes of his father under all circumstances. So Jawaharlal must not think of taking any part in the movement till he was permitted by his father to do so.

And here the matter might have ended had not events started moving very fast. The all-India *hartal* was followed by riots at Allahabad and the sad massacre of Jallianwalla Bagh which aroused great indignation all over the country. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru was himself so deeply shocked that he decided to join the Congress, and, the father having come in, the son was now free to follow him.



THE PROPHET OF PEACE
Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964)

IV

Key-Question : *How did Pandit Nehru fight and suffer for the freedom of India?*

Jawaharlal now became an active member of the Congress, and this brought him, for the first time, face to face with the naked reality of British rule in India. He had to make a tour of his own district in connection with Congress work. He went from one village to another and saw for himself the kind of life the people there were leading. He saw their dirty surroundings, their poverty, their ignorance, their backwardness in all respects. And he came to the conclusion that freedom was the one and the only remedy for all these evils.

So he decided to throw himself heart and soul into the struggle for India's freedom. The Prince of Wales was at that time touring the country and the Congress had decided to boycott his visit. A demonstration by Congress volunteers had been arranged at Allahabad, too. Jawaharlal decided to join it. He was promptly arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. This was his first term of imprisonment, followed by so many that even his closest friends have probably lost count. In a way, these terms were quite fruitful, for it was in

jail that he wrote almost all his books which made him famous all over the world long before he became the first Prime Minister of the Republic of India.

He became the General Secretary of the Congress in 1923, and continued to hold this office for another year. But in 1925, he was compelled to give up all political work, for the time being at least. His wife, Kamla, had been taken ill, and her condition was such that a change of climate had become very necessary for her. So Jawaharlal gave up the work that was so dear to his heart, and took her to Switzerland in Europe. After some time, Kamla improved and Jawaharlal returned to India after making a tour of some European countries and meeting the important people there.

Once again he busied himself in the work of the Congress. In 1929, the nation showed its gratitude for his services and sacrifices by electing him President of the Lahore session of the Congress. This session was a very important one in the history of our nation, for it was here that the Congress decided to demand *Poorna Swarajya* for the country. It declared that the nation would not be satisfied with anything short of complete independence. It also decided

that January 26 should be observed every year as Independence Day.

Then came the civil disobedience movement of 1931, and Jawaharlal found himself behind the prison-bars. And then misfortune struck him two severe blows in quick succession. The first was the death of his father, Pandit Moti Lal Nehru, after prolonged illness. The whole nation mourned his loss with Jawaharlal, for Pandit Moti Lal Nehru was a patriot and a great man in his own right. But Jawaharlal found himself heart-broken, and went away to Ceylon for a change.

Before he had fully recovered from this shock, another befell him. This time it was the turn of his wife whom he loved very dearly. She died in February, 1936. Her condition had been causing much anxiety for some time past. She was, therefore, sent to Germany for treatment. This too failed to bring about any improvement in her condition. Jawaharlal was released from jail to be by her side, but even he could not save her. Her death was indeed a great loss for him.

Back in India, he tried to forget his grief by overworking himself and, as if to help him in this, the Congress elected him its President for the second time.

In 1942, at the historic session of the All-India Congress Committee at Bombay, it was he who moved the famous 'Quit India' resolution demanding the withdrawal of British authority from India. He was arrested and kept in the Ahmednagar Fort along with other top leaders of the Congress.

V

Key–Question : *What were the achievements of Pandit Nehru as the first Prime Minister of free India* ?

Events that followed the end of the second World War are recent history. With the happy dawn of freedom in the country, the Congress took the reins of administration in its hands and Jawaharlal Nehru became the head of the Government at New Delhi. He continued to be, till his death in May, 1964, the Prime Minister of the Republic of India and held the portfolio of foreign affairs. He had many and grave problems facing him in the beginning. There was, for instance, the shortage of food in the country. The monster of communalism was threatening to devour our newly-won freedom. There were millions of refugees from Pakistan to be looked after and resettled. And, above all, there was the

great problem of making India strong and respected among the free nations of the world.

He faced these problems with courage and foresight and worked harder than ever; and the result is before us. The problem of food appears to have been solved for ever. The refugees have been provided for. Communalism is dead, and there has been all-round development in the fields of industry and agriculture.

But his most significant achievements were in the field of foreign affairs. By following his policy of neutrality, and of friendship for and co-operation with all countries, Russia as well as America, he won a position for India which is the envy of many countries with centuries of freedom behind them. It is all due to him that the voice of India is heard and respected today all over the world. In a world torn by two Great Wars, he spoke the language of peace and love and friendship. He himself visited a number of countries, including China and Russia, to establish friendly contacts with their leaders. He helped to bring peace where there was war, in Korea and Indo-China. Following the example of Ashoka, whom he greatly admired, and the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, whom he worshipped, he laid down the fiive

principles which all nations should follow in their dealings with one another. These are known as the *Panch Shila* and have now been accepted by many countries.

The tasks of peace, it is said, are more difficult than those of war. But India has produced noble souls who accomplished such tasks. Pandit Nehru followed in their footsteps. If he also succeeds after his death, as they did, the whole human race will be grateful to him for saving it from the atomic war of the future which is threatening to wipe it out.

NOTES

1

THE ENLIGHTENED ONE

they do not bother......etc.:—Most people neither know nor care to find out the meaning of life.

light :—understanding or knowledge.

salvation :—freedom from life and death; *mukti.*

written in letters of light :—Their undying names serve as shining examples for those who follow.

the path of renunciation :—the life of a *sanyasi* who gives up all worldly possessions and desires.

the warrior caste :—*Kshattriya.*

unworldly conduct :—the conduct or behaviour of one who is not interested in this world or its affairs.

chance acquaintance :—The word 'chance' has here been used as an adjective and means 'accidental'.

at the feet of :—because Gautama regarded the Brahman as his teacher.

penance :—subjecting the body to discipline and discomfort.

light came to him... etc. :—true knowledge dawned upon him. The mystery of life was explained by this knowledge and his restless soul became peaceful.

2

THE WARRIOR OF MEWAR

It is the very breath of life for them :—It is necessary for their life as breath itself.

the burning pyre :—The Rajput ladies burnt themselves alive rather than be captured by the enemy. This practice was known as '*jauhar*'.

Babar :—Akbar's grandfather who invaded India and established the Moghul dynasty here.

lion-hearted :—brave.

the king of the forest :—the lion, which is a model of fearlessness.

no army worth the name :—his small band of soldiers did not deserve to be called an army.

an uphill task :—a very difficult task, like climbing up a hill.

in right earnest :—seriously.

took a very heavy price for their lives :—fought so bravely that they killed many before being killed themselves.

followed suit :—did likewise; i. e., joined the camp of Akbar.

make a secret of :—conceal.

pay very dearly :—suffer very greatly.

Prince Saiim :—Akbar's son, who succeeded him under the name of Jahangir.

Mahawat Khan:—one of the ablest of Moghul Generals

paid for it with his life :—was killed.

made good his escape :—succeeded in escaping

his heart bled :—he felt very unhappy.

3

FATHER ABRAHAM

opyramids Egypt :—Included among the seven wonders of the world, the pyramids of Egypt are huge

monumental structures of stone built by the ancient kings of the land to house their remains.

was taken for granted :—was considered to be a very normal thing.

the enlighteued philosophers of Greece :—Greece, in the hey-day of its civilization more than 2,000 years ago, produced great philosophers like Plato, Aristotle and Socrates who are still counted among the wisest men of all time.

the mighty emperors of Rome :—The Roman civilization, which followed that of the Greeks, produced great and mighty emperors like Julius Caesar and Augustus, whose empire stretched from Asia Minor to Britain.

the Civil War :—A civil war is one between two groups or sections of people living in the same state, like the war for the abolition of slavery in America which was fought between the states of the North and those of the South.

Columbus :—the Italian navigator who, helped by the King and the Queen of Spain, discovered the American continent in 1492.

a quarrel broke out :—This quarrel is known in history as the War of American Independence. The American settlers were victorious in this war and declared themselves independent of Britain on July 4, 1776.

Red Indian natives :–the original inhabitants of America.

virgin fields :—fields ploughed and sowed for the first time.

Aesop's Fables :—a set of short stories with a moral written by Aesop. These stories are great favourites with children.

The Pilgrim's Progress :—a book written by the English writer John Bunyan.

the Bible :—the Holy Book of the Christians.

touched the deepest chords of pity :—filled his heart with intense pity for the sufferings of the slaves.

the Mississippi :—the biggest river in the United States of America.

New Orleans :—a big city on the Mississippi near the Gulf of Mexico.

to make democracy a reality :—Lincoln himself defined democracy as 'the government of the people, for the people, and by the people'. Such a system of government cannot exist till all men are treated as equals.

'honest Abe' :—'Abe' is short for 'Abraham'.

State of Illinois :—One of the states forming the U.S.A., Illinois is situated in the central part of the continent.

made such a good job of his work :—did his work sc well.

withdraw from the Union :—The U. S. A. consisted of a number of states that had joined together to form a Union. The southern states now threatened to withdraw from it.

the Stars and Stripes :—the national flag of the U.S.A.

Good Friday :—a Christian festival commemorating the crucifixion of Christ. It falls on the Friday before Easter-day.

4

THE LADY WITH THE LAMP

Derbyshire :—a county in the north of England.

stage-coach :—a horse-drawn coach running regularly, by stages, between two places. The stage-coach was the usual mode of travelling in England before the introduction of railways.

Paris :—the capital city of France. It has long been the centre of fashion and social life.

presented at the court :—To be presented at the court of the Sovereign was a mark of status, and hence the ambition of every rich man's daughter in England.

work-houses :—public institutions where paupers and beggars are lodged and looked after.

made it a point :—was very particular.

Rome :—the capital city of Italy.

Sister of Charity :—a member of a nursing sisterhood, i. e., an organisation of women devoted to the nursing of the sick.

Harley Street :—a street in London occupied mainly by the medical profession.

far off Crimea :—the Crimean peninsula is the southernmost portion of Russia.

Scutari :—place in Crimea where the British Headquarters were situated during the Crimean War.

the peninsula :—i. e., Crimea.

gave way :—broke down.

5

THE SAINT OF SABARMATI

the sword of Alexander :—Alexander was the Greek conqueror who marched from Macedonia right up to

India on his career of conquest. His soldiers fought with swords.

the tank and the bomb of Hitler :—Hitler was the Nazi dictator of Germany who started, and finally perished in, the Second World War. His armies fought with the most modern weapons like tanks and bombs.

a mighty empire :—the British Empire on which, it was said, the sun never set.

the 'naked Fakir of India' :—These words were contemptuously used by Churchill, Britain's Prime Minister, to describe Mahatma Gandhi.

General Smuts :—the Prime Minister of South Africa when Gandhiji was in that country directing his movement for the rights of the Indian settlers.

to make a clean breast of :—to confess frankly and openly.

Mrs. Besant :—Mrs. Annie Besant, a noted Theosophist, was also intimately connected with the work of the Indian National Congress.

Sermon on the Mount :—discourse of Jesus Christ reported in *Matt. v-vii*, wherein the prophet has outlined the cardinal principles of right Christian conduct.

province of Natal :—in South Africa.

Durban :—city in South Africa.

'a black coolie' :—This was the term the Europeans in South Africa generally used for the Indian settlers.

climb down :—yield.

Chauri Chaura :—This place in east U. P. was the scene of mob violence in which a number of policemen were burnt alive by the enraged people.

the 'Quit India' movement :—This was the last movement launched by the Congress in 1942. It is so called because it demanded that the British should quit, or leave, India to be administered by Indians themselves.

Mahadev Desai :—was a close associate and disciple of Gandhiji, and acted as his private secretary.

the Bhishma of our age :—Bhishma, the grandfather of the Pandavas and the Kauravas, had taken a vow never to marry, and kept it. Gandhiji also had taken a vow to free his country, and fulfilled it.

large-scale slaughter :—Thousands were killed, and tens of thousands uprooted from their homes, in the communal disorders which accompanied the partition of the country.

Noakhali :—district in East Bengal, was the scene of probably the worst communal disorder.

the fate of Jesus Christ and of Abraham Lincoln :—Jesus Christ suffered crucifixion, and Abraham Lincoln was shot dead by an assassin.

an assassin :—his name was Nathuram Vinayak Godse.

6
THE PROPHET OF PEACE

the beloved 'uncle' :—Pt. Nehru was very fond of children. All the children of India, therefore, loved and regarded him as their 'uncle'.

Harrow :—Harrow and Eton are the two most famous public schools in England, just as Cambridge and Oxford are the two most famous universities.

the Liberal Party :—The three important political parties in England are the Conservative, the Liberal, and the Labour parties.

the Swadeshi movement :—This movement aimed at teaching the people to boycott all foreign articles and to use only Indian things.

Lokmanya Tilak :—Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, one of the most important figures of our national life in the early years of the Congress before Gandhiji came on the scene.

Gandhiji's last rites at Allahabad :—The body of Gandhiji was burned at Rajghat in Delhi. His ashes and bones were later on sent to all parts of the country to be immersed in holy waters. The main immersion rites took place on the Sangam in Allahabad.

following in the footsteps of his great father :—doing as Pt. Moti Lal Nehru had done, i. e., achieving success as a lawyer.

a 'loyal' organisation :—The Congress at that time was not openly opposed to the British Government in India.

maiden speech :—first speech.

The Prince of Wales :—This title belongs to the eldest son, i. e., the heir-apparent, of the British monarch.

portfolio :—a department of administration under the charge of a minister.

his policy of neutrality :—The world today is divided into two groups of countries. America is the leader of the group of Western powers, and Russia leads the Communist countries. The policy of Pandit Nehru was to join no group, but to be friendly with both.

Korea and Indo-China :—Wars in these two countries ended as a result of the efforts of Pandit Nehru.

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